1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

to recover under bush fallow. The long-term carrying capacity of the land before the conquest cannot have been much greater than its present average value of 25 persons to the square mile.[165] Thus it is certain that in pre-conquest times the Ngoni were settled at a density even more in excess of the critical value than it is now, despite alienation. There cannot have been much cultivable land in reserve and the State was exhausting the wealth of its own soil as well as drawing on the resources of its neighbours. Thus even if the large villages had not been burnt, the same number of people could not for long have continued to live in them practising subsistence agriculture. A reduction in the density of population necessarily involved under this economy a reduction in the size of villages, for Ngoni do not like to live more than an hour's walk from their gardens. As it was, the villages were burnt, many Ngoni of Cewa origin left Ngoniland, and much of the more densely settled land, carrying up to 140 persons to the square mile, was alienated to Europeans within six years of the war.[166] The arrangement of persons over the land and the activities they carried on were both dramatically altered by the European conquest. It is, therefore, not surprising that the old society was so drastically changed at the same time. What is perhaps surprising is the extent to which, as we shall see, the forms of grouping of the past have influenced the forms of the new society.

In brief, the old political system was a system of segments, the new one is a system of villages and counties. The county segment links the two systems, but there is no function in the new order for segments embracing several counties or for those that embrace only part of a county. Within the village, the segmentary processes still go on, but at this level of organization we are dealing with kinship rather than politics. When a segment grows beyond the bounds of a single village, it begins to fade away, and we are left with a network of ties which link villages with one another but which do not define mutually exclusive groups as existed in pre-conquest times. The uncertainty about how counties should be divided internally is an indication of the lack of function of these intermediate segments. For some purposes, such as the organization of royal hunts, a county is divided into a number of rural districts. These are geographically defined areas, and it is sometimes possible to say that such-and-such a man, usually a senior lieutenant of the county segment, is the most important person in such-and-such a rural area. However, the recognizable rural districts in a county do not

[165] Allan, *Land Usage*, pp. 16-17.
[166] *N.R.A.G.G.*, 8, 2 (15 March 1904), p. 34.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

independent group of Ngoni. Chibambo mentions how the use of this salutation was discontinued when the head of an erstwhile independent group rejoined his parent group.[16] In recent times people have indicated their disapproval of the Paramount Chief's actions by discontinuing this salutation temporarily.

Despite the security of tenure provided by Administrative recognition, a chief still needs the support of his people. There is an Ngoni maxim, 'chieftainship is people',[17] and commoners are well aware that it is because they support their chief that he has high status. The simplest and most effective sanction that commoners can employ against their chief is to leave him. Movement from one county to another, from one tribe to another, and from the county to the town and back again is crucial in the working of modern Ngoni society. Not all these movements take place as the result of the unpopularity of chiefs, but this is one factor among many. Chibambo records an early example of people moving to segment 8 from the residue of segment 1 in order to share the hospitality of a newly appointed chief, but he goes on to say 'afterwards they found it wise to return to their proper division [segment]'.[17] In more recent times there are several examples, particularly among villages which entered Ngoniland after 1898 and who therefore largely lack segmental affiliation, of villages and clusters that have changed from one county to another for political reasons. More significant at the present time are the numbers of ambitious people who emigrate to the towns because, among other things, they cannot find advancement in the political hierarchy. The most striking instance of this is in the family of the late Mpezeni II. He had six sons who survived him. One is now Paramount Chief, and one is still a boy. The other four, including the chief's deputy, are town-dwellers in other parts of Africa.

5. *Royal hunts*

The royal hunt is the only occasion on which a county, or more usually a rural district or part of a county, functions as an economic unit. Even then the economic element in the enterprise is not very marked. The chief announces, through his messengers, that on such-and-such a day he will hold a royal hunt and that the men of such-and-such villages are to meet in a certain place. The procedure followed on the hunt is exactly the same as on an ordinary hunt, with the chief or someone nominated by him in tactical command, though the number of hunters is greater than on a hunt

[16] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 56.
[17] Chibambo, *My Ngoni*, p. 35.

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
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organised by a commoner. All the animals killed belong to the chief and must be taken to him. He then usually rewards the men who killed and carried the animals with part of the meat. There is thus a difference from commoner hunts, on which the animals belong to those who kill and carry them and not to the man in charge of the hunt. Whereas on a commoner hunt some men usually lose interest and drop out during the chase, this is less likely to happen on a royal hunt. A commoner, even if he is a headman, cannot force his neighbours to come with him on a hunt, but occasionally if the field is very poor a chief will summon absentees in his court.

These royal hunts appear to be of social rather than economic significance. Big game is scarce in Ngoniland, and a hunt attended by two hundred men may sometimes yield as few as half a dozen antelope. Ngoni like to eat game meat, but they do not regard hunting as an activity in which game should be killed as effectively as possible. They scorn the much more efficient methods employed by the Cewa, illegal though they are in the eyes of the Administration. An Ngoni lad was once ordered by his village headman to attend me on a hunt in which we used nets in Cewa fashion. The lad was sulky throughout the hunt and made no effort to kill any animals. A few days later we went hunting again, this time employing Ngoni techniques. We tramped many miles on a very hot day and killed nothing at all, and yet he appeared to have thoroughly enjoyed himself. Royal hunts must be seen in this light. A chief can no longer command a regiment of soldiers but he can call out his men hunting.[10] Men attend because they consider it their duty to do so and because they are aware of the sanctions at the chief's disposal.

Royal hunts are sometimes of practical importance, when there are lions to be hunted. Lions appear in Ngoniland sporadically, apparently on passage between the game reserve on the Nyasaland side of the border and the sparsely inhabited Luangwa Valley. Hunters like to be in strength when tackling lion, and the men of a county look to their chief to call a royal hunt to deal with them. Chiefs are relatively well supplied with guns, and the combination of many hunters armed with spears and a few guns gives confidence.

6. *African bureaucrats*

Prior to the recognition of Native Courts in 1929 there was little specialization in the functions of the various indigenous leaders supported by the Administration. All of them, chief, sub-

[10] See my 'Fort Jameson Ngoni', p. 213, for Ngoni hunting methods.

to its use at the *incwala* ceremony and dance was a reminder of the former belief in the close connection between the health and strength of the Paramount and the fertility of the land and its crops, a belief which had its counterpart in the cremation of the Paramount and the sweeping of the ashes into the river to fertilise the land.

The *incwala*, or ceremony of the first-fruits, was of great importance among the Swazi, and the Ngoni 'took it with them' when they left the south. Among the northern and central Ngoni the tradition of the ceremony remained, but the practice was given up before the kingdoms were finally established. Cibumbo collected from the old men in the northern kingdom the following account of what took place at the *incwala*:

'Among the dances of the Ngoni, *ngoma*, *umtindo*, *lipuba*, *incwala* was the best and most important. They say it lasted about two weeks, or if it began when the moon was full until it became new again. When they said "*incwala* is closed", no one sings or dances it again; when it begins everyone sings the songs of *incwala* and no others. This dance belonged to the Paramount of the whole country. A description of *incwala* is difficult because it was given up long ago. Even the old people of today have never seen it.

It began in the middle of the month of *Ja.-kwi* (January). Young men were sent to look for ripe food in the gardens by streams. The owners had not picked any nor was much of the crop nearly ready. They took some juicy stalks of maize, and pumpkins with their roots. They also looked for a wild fruit like a gourd, very bitter, which some people use to stir up their dogs to make them fierce in hunting and quick in scent. This fruit the Ngoni call *igwanza*. These they mix with medicines and the *inkosi* eats it without the people knowing. The belief was that if the Paramount ate the first-fruits carelessly, or if the people were the first to taste the first-fruits of the year, there would be disaster for the *inkosi* and the country. After a month, when the crops were ripening, the *incwala* began, the crops not being completely ripe and no one having yet tasted the new crops.

In the month of February the *inkosi* announced that everywhere the *incwala ya'nkosi* should begin on such-and-such a day. Quickly much beer was cooked in all the villages by everyone. On the day the beer-making began, the dance began also. The word was sent round everywhere: *incwala inguvukiliso*, 'incwala is now opened'. All the people went to the central village of Ekangeni, the village of Hlazweyo. They took crops which had been planted in December, *impala*, and added the first *igwanza* fruit to them. Great crowds of people gathered at Ekangeni and danced. Many were in the kraal but many more were dancing outside. All were dressed carefully. They danced with reeds in their hands or with the sticks of their shields. It seemed as though the song everywhere was the same. Women going for wood and water, and children and youths, wherever they went, the song was on their lips. In dancing the women were by themselves, and the men by themselves. They faced each other in the dance. They were bending their bodies backwards and forwards, and moving their necks and shoulders.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

schools, in sermons by Ngoni ministers in the churches. Fathers gathered their children together, boys and girls, on such occasions, and said to them: 'Listen. Do you hear? This is about our people from the beginning. Remember well. Do not forget, for the Ngoni cannot forget their past.'

A young man of about twenty related to me how his father, the head of a leading clan, used to talk to him about the Ngoni past when they went on hunting trips together on Mount Choma, where Paramount Mbelwa and his Ngoni had first settled in Northern Nyasaland. In among the dry grass the father showed the boy the sites of former villages, the polished floors and the sturdy door-posts of the huts, and the stumps of the kraal fences. He heard in that historical setting the story of one of the famous secessions from the main Ngoni kingdom. 'Early one morning,' said his father, 'we woke up, we who remained, and we saw that Giwere had gone. All the people shouted "Giwere has separated from us. He has separated indeed. Our Paramount is poor because of his departure."'

It was largely through their own efforts that the Ngoni succeeded in teaching their history to their children in the schools. More than one Ngoni leader who had been educated by the Scottish Mission began writing the history of his own people, and in their villages I found several young men recording in writing the traditions as told them by their grandfathers. One Ngoni minister, Rev. Y. M. Chiumbo, for twenty years systematically recorded and checked and compared these traditions. His books in the local vernacular were used as readers in the mission schools, and later translated into English as *My Ngoni of Nyasaland*.

Sermons in church by Ngoni ministers not only referred to historical events which were illustrated in songs or recorded in oral traditions but to the role of the famous diviners, called prophets, 'dreamers of the head', who foretold the advent and manner of arrival of the Europeans. The Ngoni Christian leaders went further than this. They used the

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FRS Ngoni FRS

177 233 234 natural translation for Ngoni young men to become butchers and dairymen, if they could apprentice themselves to a relative, or if their father could put up the necessary capital outlay for starting independently. This conversion of knowledge and traditional skill into a channel offering higher rewards in cash incomes found the young Ngoni adult well prepared to earn his living.

Hunting

● 224 There was an aura of manhood and of distinction about all forms of hunting among the Ngoni. They did it because they enjoyed it, and not seriously to augment their family's food supply. There were two main corporate forms of hunting: the chase, when hare and deer were hunted with dogs; and killing lions and leopards. The first was the pursuit of a Ngoni gentleman which no one wanted to miss during the right season; and the second was the act of warriors defending themselves and their cattle and villages from marauders.

169 224 Ngoni boys in their herding days acquired some of the skills needed later for hunting with the men. They made traps to catch birds from the hair of cows tails or smeared bird lime on branches. They developed great adroitness at hitting birds on the wing with knobkerries. In these pursuits, which for them were half fun, half to get bits of extra food, they were training their eye, learning to observe the habits of birds and small animals, learning to track them, and developing that combination of patience, prompt action and accuracy of aim essential to successful hunting.

Some of the Ngoni men liked to go off hunting on their own, usually those who had a gun. Fathers used to take their sons on such hunting trips, and use the opportunity to teach them how to track successfully, how to put up with hunger and thirst on long marches, how to load and fire a gun. One young man described how his father used to point out to him on such trips the birds and butterflies in the bush. On one trip his father taught him to use his muzzle-loading gun, how

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

to carry it safely when loaded and how to aim carefully. His father, who was a noted preacher, then likened aiming in shooting to aims in life: 'There are many things in the world, and when you see them you will think that you can have them all at once. But you will fail if you have no aim and do not choose what you want to aim at.'

The 'chase', the main Ngoni form of hunting in a group, took place in the hot dry season, after the grass fires and before the first rains fell. A leading man who wanted to hunt sent messengers to neighbouring villages to announce that a hunt would be held on a certain day in such and such an area. The form of the message was the same as that for mobilization for war. The villagers turned out in companies according to their old military formations; and on the night before the hunt they slept apart from their wives, as when mobilized for a campaign. On reaching the hunting site, the slope of a hill, or the head of a valley, or a shallow depression, the important people were in the centre, the ordinary men around them and the youths on the wing. All could come to the hunt, masters and servants alike.

Etiquette was strict about the kill. The first man who wounded the game with his spear called out his name, the second who inflicted a wound did the same, and so did the man who dealt the final blow. All those three were entitled to some part of the animal according to his share in the killing, and part was set aside for the 'owner' of the hunt. Spears were used in this kind of hunt, and those who had no spears, chiefly the non-Ngoni servants and lesser villagers, used long hunting-knives and knobkerries. No guns were taken on this kind of chase, but dogs accompanied the huntsmen. These dogs were trained for hunting and tracking game, and were lean and fierce but under control by their owners. Accompanying the main body of huntsmen were skilled trackers who knew the area well and could guide the hunt, calling out at intervals one of the Ngoni war-cries: 'Listen. Do you hear me? I say the game is over there.'

224 After the hunt the tally of kills was reckoned up, the game was carried home by the young men, and on the return to [262] the villages the meat was cooked and eaten by the men at the kraal gate. This was the occasion for going over all [521] the episodes of the chase, the skill of So-and-so, the fine organizing of the hunt by its 'owner'. No one mentioned the misses, no one's feelings were hurt, and there was a warm feeling of united and contented sharing in a good day's sport.

Lion-hunting was organised differently. Only former warriors and well-known huntsmen were called, and they sometimes took their sons with them as carriers. Guns as well as spears were taken, though the Ngoni liked to say, and it was often true, that they killed lions with spears only. Tracking a lion was dangerous and difficult, and when it was located in a patch of tall grass or reeds, the huntsmen made a circle round it, ready to attack when it broke cover. As in the chase, the one who stabbed the lion first, second and finally was noted. The dead lion was hoisted on poles slung from the shoulders of young men, and carried to the village where the hunt was organised. Here the party was welcomed and given food, the heroes were acclaimed, and the headman and seniors led the way to the village of the clan head, who called his men together to rejoice. When the augmented party reached the chief's or Paramount's village, [535] where all lions had to be taken, a war-dance took place in [555] the kraal, as of warriors returning from a campaign. The killer of the lion came out in front of the rest and danced his individual war-dance; he was hailed as a hero and new [273] epithets were added to his praise names. The whole party [574] was given beer, a beast was killed for a meat feast, and then the party thanked the Paramount in traditional fashion and went home.

It was in lion-hunting that young adults who were taken along felt the spice of danger, the thrill of success, and witnessed the pride of recognition for the successful killer by the Paramount and all 198 the Ngoni leaders.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

an adequate garden for his wife. He may clear a fresh garden on rejuvenated land, or enlarge his own or his wife's garden, depending on how they are placed. It is usually not until much later in the marriage that a man starts a garden of his own, distinct from the one nominally owned by his wife. The work of clearing a new place for a garden is not, among the Ngoni, necessarily a man's job, and can be undertaken by a woman alone if she has no man to assist her. If the husband is present, he does most of the tree felling, and his wife breaks up the new ground with her hoe.

The planting, weeding, and cultivating are all done by both men and women, and during the wet season a man goes to the garden with his wife early in the morning and they both work there until they are tired. Later, when the growing crop has to be protected against monkeys by day and wild pigs by night, they both spend long hours on watch in the garden shelter. At harvest, both cut down the maize and lift the ground crops, but only the woman can carry the produce to the village. If the man helps, it is by bringing a cart or sledge and taking home a large load pulled by oxen.

In the other subsistence pursuits of animal husbandry and hunting there is no co-operation between husband and wife until the animals have been killed, when the woman has to cook the meat. Hunting is entirely a male occupation, and animal husbandry largely so. If a man goes away on a journey, he leaves his cattle in charge of his son or brother or father rather than with his wife. If there is no trustworthy man available, then they become his wife's responsibility, but all she in fact does is to see that the senior herdboy reports to her every evening about the state of the beasts. Small stock such as goats and sheep and pigs may be looked after entirely by the wife, and chickens are likely to be in her care.

A man looks to his wife to feed him, and it is considered a reflection on her industry if he does not get enough and has to hang about when his companions are eating in the hope that they will invite him to join them. She feeds him within the exigencies of the food-supply, which often involves semi-starvation in February and March. She is expected to cook competently, and if a woman continually burns the porridge which forms the basis of every meal, there will be strife between her and her husband. If she proves to be a really bad cook her husband may send her home again to be taught properly.

Beer-brewing is the work of women, and is a process lasting at least six days even after all the correct ingredients have been mustered. There is some variation with status in the extent to which husbands require their wives to brew beer, and it is in any case a matter in which the woman can take the initiative. Important men and chiefs who have many visitors like to be able to offer beer to their guests, so that queens spend much time brewing. But common men need to conserve their food supplies more carefully, and know that their visitors will be disappointed but not surprised if there is no beer. A woman sometimes brews to sell the beer and gain [illegible]

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

XI

HUNTING

224 I. When a man wishes to call up a hunting party, he tells the young men of his village, saying, "Go and summon the hunt, and tell the people that it goes in such and such a direction, and it is there we shall assemble." Then the young men get their knobkerries and set out; they are knocking them together, and singing, "Roast, roast, roast," and when they come to a village, the headman comes out and answers, "Roast," and says, "Whose is it?" (the hunt). And they say, "It is so and so's, and goes in such and such a direction, and it is there we shall meet." Next morning, at dawn, they begin to assemble, their dogs are in the leash, and they bring their spears and knobkerries, and make some little child go in front, saying, "Cross your arms over your shoulders." And when they come to where the hunt will start from, they say, "Lie down there, and do not move about." Then every one who comes along takes a branch and piles it upon the child. And that is so that the game may not go and be shy. Then the master of the hunt begins to instruct the hunters, saying, "Look here, some of you have got your dogs; look well at their marks." And then he begins to arrange the hunt, saying, "Let so and so's wing go there, and so and so's there, I myself take the centre." And they start off, advancing all along the line. If a buck start up, and one spear it, and another spear it a second time, he (the second one) has a share in it too. The one who first throws, should he only wound the animal ever so slightly, and his companion then kill it out-

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

right, the animal is the property of him who first [drew blood].

II. Should it be a buck about which there is a dispute, one saying, "My dog was first," another, "My dog was first," then they say, "Come, let us dig up medicine." And they take the medicine, one his lot, the other his, and chew a bit between the teeth, and one blows it out over his dog, saying, "You dog, if it were not you (who caught the buck), you must die; if it were you, you must vomit." And the other man says the same (to his dog), and they see the dog of one of them is dying. Should it chance that two men throw together, and one says, "It was I who began," they say, "Do not let us be always arguing about this; come, let us go to the medicine man." They do not drink (the poison) themselves, but their dogs drink. And when they have finished hunting they say, "Let us be getting back now." All the game they have killed they pile up together, and the master of the hunt begins to "twist off" the legs that are his share. If they see that there is a great quantity of meat, they cut it in strips, and make a drying rack and light a fire (under it), that the meat may dry. When dry, it is taken off the rack and tied into bundles.

III. One way of hunting is with many men and dogs, and another of the single hunter. Others, again, dig game pits, and make long fences leading up to them, leaving gaps here and there where the pits are. Another way of hunting is by cutting off a stretch of bush. A man separates his bit of jungle, [by clearing a bare strip all round it] and when all the bush is burned, it alone remains. The game run away from the bare place and enter the bush patch; when the rains are just about to begin to fall, he goes and sets fire to the cut off bush patch. When the game run for the open, people kill them.

6:Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

224 A falling spear trap for an elephant is called "*mchera*." It is set in the path where elephants pass. They take the weighted spear, and tie it up above, the string for setting it off is on the ground. An elephant, when it passes, will set off the string, and the spear comes down and falls on the spine of the elephant. Men hunt also with a game net; they stretch the net, and take staves and drive them in at the ends and the middle [to keep the net up]. People remain behind and hunt out the game, and when a buck starts up, it goes into the net. Birds
223 are hunted with a little net made tied to two bamboos, which are held in the hands, and (the person hunting) stands still. Others go and drive the birds, and if they go into the net, the man who is holding it swirls it round and kills the birds by squeezing them to his breast, lest they cry out, and meanwhile gives a whistle, and the beaters stand. The kinds of birds caught by a net are *Mpeta*, *Atii*
[136] *Madzanjo*, *Mapwiti*, *Kazikuzi*. *Nkwali* (partridge), *Nkanga* (guinea-fowl), *Mang'ani* (quail), *Njiwa* (pigeon) are hunted with knobkerries; when they fly up, they throw. Birds are also hunted with blunt-headed arrows, and others caught in traps. In the dry season, when there is only a very little water left, all the thirsty birds go to drink water, and always go to the same place. When a person sees they frequent this place, he begins to set about trapping them with birdlime. He rubs it on a stick, and sticks the stick in the water, and when the birds come to drink water, they get stuck by their
224 feet (legs), and also feathers. Mice are also hunted. The *Mende*, and the *Nchenzi* (rat), and the *Sakuzi*, are all hunted with "gobe" traps, which are set on the run. Some go and hunt them out, one stays behind; when a mouse would run away, it goes into the gobe trap, and the man squeezes it to death, and

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

turns it out. They also trap them with a falling stone trap, and a spring trap, and others they dig for and smoke out. Mice dig out a hole, and a little farther on make a little chamber, where their nest is; farther on still is their escape exit, with just a thin layer of earth between them and the surface, so that when any one starts digging they can just burst out there. Other mice make a nest in the grass. The *Siswiri* mouse people do not eat; it cannot jump a path; if it tries to, it dies.

XII

THE WITCH-FINDER

I. When a person has died, the chief mourner goes off to seek the witch-finder. When he finds him he says, "At my home something awful has happened, and I am saying that perhaps you can follow up the thing that has killed the person." The witch-finder comes very late in the evening. When he comes, the chief mourner gives him children to lead him to the grave. When they come to the grave there, he asks them, saying, "Which way did they come with the body?" And they say they came there. And he puts medicine where they came, and asks again, saying, "Well, and his head, which direction did they lay it?" And they tell him, "His head was in this direction." He again with medicine guards the place. Then the witch-finder makes fire, and kindles it into flame, and pours medicine on it; and he does so lest people see the fire. And then they see the human flesh-eaters

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

132 84° F. and the mean minimum 61·5° F.[1] Three seasons are distinguished: the wet season, from the beginning of November until about April; the cold season, from May until July; and the hot season, from August until the rains begin again. Most of the planting takes [241] place in the first half of the wet season, and the harvest comes after the rains have ceased. There is very little fishing, but antelopes, leopards, ●224 wild pig, and buck are hunted for their meat, and lions, leopards, 136 hyenas, and monkeys on account of the damage they do to crops and livestock. The greater part of the region is free enough from tsetse fly to permit cattle-keeping, and for the tribe as a whole there is approxi- [231] mately one head of cattle to every two people. Pigs, sheep, goats, and chickens are also kept.

171 The material culture of the tribe is similar to that of their neigh- 342 bours. They live in one- or two-roomed huts of bamboo or pole and 323 mud; some women make pottery and some men make reed mats; 235 all buy their clothes and their hoes from the shops.[2]

197 Three languages are used in the region: Ci-Ngoni, a language akin to Zulu, is now heard only in songs and royal praises; Ci-Nyanja is taught in the schools and is used for communication with Europeans and Indians; while the normal language used every day in the villages is a dialect of Ci-Ngoni.

I. THE STATE

Old Administrative System

186 The Ngoni think of themselves as different from their neighbours 649 because of their chieftainship. The other tribes do not, in the eyes 642 of the Ngoni, possess the same kind of pyramidal and centralized organization which was characteristic of the régime of Mpezeni I and which persists in a modified form at the present time.

649 The important positions in the old political structure were occupied 631 by members of the royal lineage, their queens, the regional governors,[3] 554 and the lieutenants.[4] The political system was at the same time the territorial system, residence being determined by political allegiance. The pattern of residence and allegiance persisted despite the movement of the tribe as a whole from one region to another and despite

[1] Trapnell, *Ecological Survey*, pp. 1–3.
[2] See my *Material Culture of the Fort Jameson Ngoni*.
[3] *Mabwanawa*, pl. *ebwanawa*. [4] *Nduna*, pl. *adunu*.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

The councilors and assessors are nominated by the chiefs on the advice of their lieutenants and some of them are in fact lieutenants or their sons. The court clerk acts as secretary to his chief if he is illiterate, and he assists the chief in his contacts with the Administration. These clerks are also sometimes sons of lieutenants or brothers of chiefs. One of the tasks of the court clerk is to issue licences of all kinds, for guns, beer selling, bicycles, dogs, and so on. This brings him into contact with many people and he does a certain amount of touring looking for unlicensed dogs and bicycles. Owing to this interest in licences and the running of the court, he is the person who takes the initiative in the few public prosecutions that are brought. Civil actions are initiated by paying sixpence for a summons, which is usually issued by the court clerk. He is thus well informed of quarrels in advance before they come up for hearing in the court. He is well known throughout the county and exercises a great deal of influence. 647 [693]

Chiefs and People

Whenever beer was brewed in a village, there was an obligation to carry one pot to the chief, and this obligation persists. Apart from this, however, there does not seem ever to have been any organized system of sending tribute to the chief. Mpezeni is said to have had a monopoly of all prisoners of war, but those who had taken the captives were frequently allowed to keep them themselves. This is mentioned as a specific privilege of regional governors. Nowadays the chiefs expect hospitality when they enter the villages, but they have little call on the services of their people. The little assistance they get locally is probably less valuable than the presents they are given by men who are away working or who have just returned. When the chiefs visit the mining towns they are offered money and clothes by Ngoni working there. 622 431 [273] [727]

The chiefs own a number of guns and lend these to people they can trust. All the chiefs organize their own hunts, which differ from the hunts of ordinary people in that all the animals killed belong to the chief, who should, however, give a leg to the killer of each animal. Attendance is compulsory for adult men in the villages that are called out on the hunt, although in practice there are always many absentees. These royal hunts do not usually involve a whole county, but only part of the county. They are useful in keeping down the number of predatory animals, and damage done to crops by wild pigs and baboons is sometimes attributed to the failure of the chief to organize enough hunts. 622 224 [911] [736]

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

call rural districts. By virtue of their membership of rural districts and counties, villages have certain formal relationships with each other which we may regard as mainly political, and which we have discussed in connexion with the organization of the state. But there are other inter-village activities that are not related directly to the tribal political structure. These include hunting, dancing, drinking, trading, and some co-operative economic activities.

Hunting takes place for the most part in the dry season, but hunts may be organized at any time to deal with predatory animals which are causing damage to crops and livestock. Only men and boys hunt. Any man who chooses can organize a hunt, but it is usually a man of middle age with some experience and of some standing in his village who sends out word to the neighbouring villages that he proposes to hunt in such-and-such an area on such-and-such a day. The organizer is referred to as the owner of the hunt, and he is in tactical command. He nominates two men to be in charge of the two wings of the hunt, and himself stays in the middle of the single line abreast in which the hunters arrange themselves. Instructions are shouted from the centre and passed out to the wings. Any animals seen are attacked with knobkerries, spears, dogs, and, if there are any, guns. The owner of the hunt has no special privileges over the animals killed, which are divided between the men who actually kill them and the people who carry them back from the hunt to the village. Attendance at such hunts is not enforced, and if the chase is unsuccessful, people tend to drop out half-way. In the main, people distribute themselves along the line of the hunt in village groups, and the leaders of the wings usually bring with them a large band of hunters from their own villages. There are usually about sixty people on a hunt, coming from perhaps ten different villages.

Dancing is an activity that brings people together from many villages. Although girls, and sometimes boys, hold dances in their own villages in the evenings, these dances are thought of as practices rather than as proper dances. The latter take place in connexion with ceremonies of various kinds, and indeed wherever there is beer to drink there is the probability of some sort of dancing. Dances are also held for their own sake, without reference to other forms of social activity. Of these, two are important in promoting inter-village ties. The first, *ngoma*,[1] the most formal of all dances, was danced by regiments in the days when the regimental system was still operative, but

[1] Cf. the Zulu dance *ingoma*, and Read, *Tradition and Prestige*, p. 50.

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352 Beds are owned in general by the younger generation only, and then at the rate of one per household. Otherwise, everyone sleeps on the floor on a reed mat. During the day, the mat is rolled 385 up except when needed for drying flour in the sun. These mats are made from reeds that grow near streams. The reeds are split in four, and are threaded with a thin rope made from the inner bark of the nzizi tree. Wooden headrests are now a rarity, and if any 513 [M] headrests at all is used, it is a European pillow. Blankets, quilts and, less frequently, sheets, are bought from stores.

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412 The chief tool for use in the garden is the hoe. Ruins of fur- [385] naces for smelting iron ore are still to be seen, but are not now used, [514] and are said to have been worked in the old days only by Chewa slaves. Hoe blades are bought in the stores, and hafted with a handle made in the village. Handle making is a man's job, but one that every man knows how to do. Axes are made from blades bought in the store, or else from a worn down hoe blade, with a home-made handle. Adzes are used for mortar making, and young boys make miniature adzes as toys. A pointed blade hafted on to the end of a straight handle is used for making holes in the ground when building.

393 Sledges and, less commonly, unarticulated carts with solid [391] wheels are made for transporting the harvest from the fields to the village, and for collecting firewood. These are pulled by cattle, [Bull] not always oxen, using simple yokes made of wood and sinew, with wooden drawbar.

224 Hunting is carried on in the dry season, particularly towards 411 the end, when the grass burns easily. Guns of varying degrees of antiquity are used, but none of these are made by Ngoni, although the Chewa still make guns. On a hunt, the rank and file are armed 224 with throwing spears and knobkerries. The gun carriers walk about two hundred yards in front of the main body, who are spread on a single line at right angles to the line of advance. The leader of

/9 cont'd/

234 the hunt walks in the middle of the line, with a responsible person posted on each flank. A started animal, if not shot by the guns, usually turns to run parallel to the line of hunters, who hurl spears and knobkerries at it, and send their dogs after it. The chances of escape for a hunted animal are fairly high. Animals are also trapped, usually with a piece of meat tied to the muzzle of a gun. Hunting with nets is sometimes undertaken in the wet season. Rats are caught in small conical traps baited with beans. The rat chews through a piece of string and releases a green stick, thereby strangling itself.

[114] Shields, once the pride of the Ngoni armies, are not carried on hunts and are infrequently seen.

VI

234 [171] It is only the old men who still wear skin garments, and then only as additions to European style clothing. Men are dressed in khaki shorts and shirts, long trousers, cast-off European clothing, or clothes brought back from the army. Often two shirts are worn on top of one another. Women wear a blouse, a skirt tied on a tape, a cloth wrapped round on top of the skirt, and a small cloth tied [254] round their waist. If carrying a baby, the cloth supporting the child is slung over the left and under the right shoulder, and another cloth may be wrapped round the woman and child under her armpits. Dresses are also worn, and sometimes a singlet under the blouse. Shoes are less common for women than for men. Men /10/ wear a [177] variety of European style hats, but women wear only embroidered cloths or berets, or in the case of poorer women, plain bands of cloth.

Children go naked, or may be draped in whatever garment, of whatever size, happens to be available. If the money is there to pay for them, boys are dressed in shorts and shirts, and girls in little dresses.

304 [178] In the old days, every adult had slit ears, but this custom has died out. Women nowadays pierce their ears if they wish, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between a small slit made as a

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252 The maize is shelled as required, the grains are pounded in a mortar, and then soaked in water for three or four days, if there is time. They are then pounded again, and the flour winnowed out. [034] The residue is ground between two stones. The husks obtained after [093] the first pounding are used as animal fodder, and in beer making. The diligent housewife pounds twice a week, each pounding lasting for about three hours. It is usual for a group of women living as [461] neighbours to pound at the same time, singing together.

The maize flour is dried in the sun, and then put into a pot or [251] basket until required for porridge or beer. Porridge forms the basis 262 of most meals, although in February and March there may not be enough maize left in the storehouses to make this possible. Adults [347] eat porridge in solid form, kneading handfuls of it between their fingers before eating, but infants are fed on fluid porridge made from [853] the ground flour. The herdboys in charge of the cattle may use the milk to make their porridge with. Cooking is women's work, but [461] men by themselves on a journey or working on the tobacco farms will cook porridge for themselves. Green mealies, usually fried, are eaten when available.

263 Relish is required to go with the porridge, the commonest relishes being pumpkin leaves and hibiscus leaves. There are in addition 222 many wild fruits and leaves searched for in the bush at their appro- 29 priate seasons, while the gardens provide pumpkins, cucumbers, 262 various kinds of beans and peas, and edible gourds. The most sought-after relish, and one of the most infrequently found, is meat. Chick- 262 ens are given to honoured visitors, while beef, mutton, pork, and goat meat are eaten when they can be found. Livestock other than [231] chickens are killed for eating only on ceremonial occasions, such as funerals or marriages, but owners not infrequently kill animals and sell the meat to raise money to pay damages, to finance a journey, or to obtain labour in the garden. Animals that die are usually eaten. Some people keep ducks, pigeons and tame guinea fowl, while such 235 game as is killed on the /13/ hunt is divided among the hunters and taken home to be eaten. Owners of guns sometimes hunt by them- 224 selves and sell the meat.